



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information, Contact:
Kirby Kruger
State Epidemiologist
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.2378
E-mail: kkruger@nd.gov

State Health Department Announces First Death Associated With H1N1 Influenza in North Dakota

Please note: The following information will be discussed at the 3 p.m. media availability.

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health announced today the state's first H1N1 influenza-related death, according to State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D.

The individual was a resident of northwestern North Dakota. According to Dwelle, the man was older than 60 and had underlying medical conditions.

"We extend our sympathy to the family and loved ones of the gentleman who died," Dwelle said. "This loss should remind all of us that influenza, whether seasonal or H1N1, can be a serious illness for some people."

As of Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2009, a total of 1,216 cases of influenza had been reported to the Department of Health. It is estimated that about 92 percent of the influenza circulating in North Dakota is H1N1.

"It's so very important that we all do our part to help stop the spread of influenza," Dwelle said. "That's why we keep urging people to wash their hands often throughout the day, cover their coughs and sneezes, and stay home when they are sick. These simple steps can make a huge difference in stopping the spread of flu."

Late this week, 21,000 doses of H1N1 influenza vaccine will be allocated to the state. This allocation will consist of both the nasal spray FluMist and the injectable flu shot. The allocated doses will be shipped to various providers throughout North Dakota next week.

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600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: health@nd.gov

Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

The North Dakota Department of Health has activated a toll-free public health hotline for people to call if they have questions about influenza. (The hotline cannot provide medical advice to callers. For that information, people should call their physicians.) The number to call is 866.207.2880. The hotline is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Standard Time. Information about influenza also is available on the Department of Health's influenza website at www.ndflu.com.

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